

# W5YI REPORT

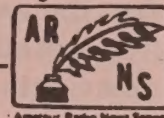
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## Dits & Bits

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## FCC Approves "Novice Enhancement!"

[EDITOR'S NOTE: The FCC approved Novice Enhancement on January 28th and issued a very short "sketchy" press release on Friday, January 30th. The actual Report & Order will not be available until Monday, February 9. We will update this newsletter to include changes that we understand the FCC has authorized over the NPRM before publishing.

At this point (February 7th) we know that Novices have voice privileges in the 10 (28 MHz), 1.25 (220 MHz) and .23 (1240 MHz) meter bands. We also know that Element 3 - the Technician-General written test has been separated into two examinations: VHF/UHF Element 3(A) for the Technician Class and MF/HF Element 3(B) for General. While we are waiting for the final Report & Order, let's discuss the...

### BACKGROUND OF NOVICE ENHANCEMENT

Exactly twenty years ago the Federal Communications Commission implemented new rules that would change the basic licensing structure of Amateur Radio for all time. A controversial system called Incentive Licensing (Docket 67-978) was adopted and implemented to provide motivation for the up-grading of approximately 100,000 General Class ticket holders to higher classes. There is an unbelievable close parallel between the Amateur Radio Service's Incentive Licensing major rulemaking of 1967 and 1987's newly authorized Novice Enhancement.

The goal of Incentive Licensing was to reward amateurs with additional privileges if they increased their radio skill and knowledge. The major beneficiaries were primarily long term amateurs who obtained specially reserved frequencies as an inducement to upgrade to Advanced and Extra Class levels. It is also when Extras got exclusive use of new prime 25 kHz CW sections in the 80, 40, 20 and 15 meter bands. There was about 250,000 amateurs at the time.

The 1967 Incentive licensing process starting with petitions submitted by amateurs but it was the ARRL's influence that really got the measure rolling and approved by the Commission. Many General Class amateurs had their frequencies cut and had to upgrade to regain them. (Most still have never forgiven the League for supporting the measure.)

Incentive Licensing also provided for a new examination to be known as Element 4A - the re-established Advanced Class written test. Advanced Class licenses had not been available from the FCC for some fifteen years prior. The FCC simply divided the knowledge required for the Extra Class license into two sections, examination Elements 4A for the Advanced class ticket and 4B for Extras.

Novices permanently lost the VHF (145-147 MHz) phone privileges in 1968 which most



of you probably never new they once had! Back then, the 2-meter band was considered experimental. Repeater use had not yet caught on. 1987's new Novice Enhancement proceeding seeks once again to allow Novice VHF voice operation.

Some twenty years later, the Commission's Incentive licensing rulemaking still upsets many amateurs who blame the ARRL for its enactment. Actually the League was not totally responsible. Most of the 1,700 comments from other amateurs approved of it.

## HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF!

In January the FCC did it again! This time the benefactors of the sweeping Amateur Radio Service changes are beginners. The action is every bit as important as Incentive Licensing and, in many ways, merely an extension of it.

While the primary goal of Incentive Licensing was to motivate existing amateurs to increase their electronic knowledge, Novice Enhancement seeks to persuade beginners to pursue high tech careers by interesting them at an early age in the radio art!

The service has shown a steady decline over the years in the number of new entrants into the Amateur Radio Service. The average ham's age is now well up in years. It used to be in the teens. The general feeling is that this situation exists primarily because the privileges offered at the entry (Novice) level are inadequate to entice newcomers to enter the hobby ...and out of touch with today's technology and school classroom environment.

Youngsters are bombarded from every quadrant with high tech electronics, satellite communications ...and the magic of computers. Practically none have any interest in Morse operation - the only beginning amateur radio operating mode currently available to them. Right or wrong, hardly a mention is ever made of Morse code operation in today's school classroom. Newcomers equate the code to radio tubes... it works ...but inefficient, antiquated and hardly state-of-the-art.

## NOVICE ENHANCEMENT TAKES SHAPE

Novice Enhancement got its start when an amateur from the sleepy west Texas town

of Brady, Larry W. Garens, KC5OQ (now WD5H), submitted the first of four petitions to the FCC seeking to expand the operating privileges for Novice operators by allowing them voice privileges in the 10 meter and 220-225 MHz band. Little did he realize that one day he would be considered the father of what amounts to an Amateur Radio Service reorganization.

His suggestions took on renewed importance when on June 6th, 1985, the ARRL (without mentioning the previous Garens' petitions) proposed "to provide greater motivation for amateurs-to-be to obtain their first license without reducing the incentive to upgrade by attaching too many privileges to what is, and should continue to be, an elementary license." While Garens got the bandwagon started, it was the League that got it rolling.

Similar to the Garens' proposals, the League suggested 10-meter Novice sideband voice privileges (which could provide an occasional opportunity for long distance radio contacts) and the use of the 1.25 meter (220-225 MHz) band ...including voice communication through repeaters. The League also added a 1246 to 1260 MHz (23 centimeter band) allocation to their petition.

Garens responded with a fifth petition on November 29, 1985, suggesting that a segment of the new WARC 902-928 MHz band be added to his earlier proposals. He said he felt that this would provide an opportunity for computer hobbyists to enter Amateur Radio and link their computers via ham radio circuits.

The ARRL suggested transmitter power levels of 200 watts for Novice 10-meter operation, 25 watts for 220-225 MHz and 5 watts for Novice 1246-1260 MHz use. While Novices could operate through repeaters on the 1.25 and 0.23 meter band, they would not be permitted to be control operators or repeater owners.

The League, feeling that Citizens Band operators might use re-crystalled AM rigs in the new 10-meter Novice voice band, asked that double sideband AM emission not be authorized. Practically no amateur operator uses this mode and a restriction against A3E would force new Novices to communicate with

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amateurs rather than among themselves. The League felt strongly that exposure to the more disciplined operation of the Amateur Radio Service was very important.

Since Novices (and Technician class amateurs) would be gaining new privileges, the League suggested that the Novice (Element 2) written examination be expanded to 300 questions to provide for 100 additional questions covering the new Novice voice class. The ARRL also insisted that two, rather than one, General class level or higher volunteer examiners test and certify Novices "to preserve the integrity of the Novice examination."

## FCC ISSUES NPRM

That set the stage for the FCC adopting a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking some six months later. On April 18, 1986, the Commission proposed in PR Docket No. 86-161 to... "Amend the Amateur Radio Service Rules to Expand the Privileges Available to Novice Operators." The NPRM became known simply as Novice Enhancement although it affected the Technician Class as well ...since Techs would automatically receive any additional privileges granted to the new Novice voice class. The bandwagon was now going full steam ahead!

The NPRM largely supported the features as proposed by the League although the FCC said they weren't convinced that new Novices needed to be certified by two VE's.

The FCC also reminded the amateur community that although their NPRM provided for a 220-225 MHz Novice voice allocation, that other commercial interests had petitioned the Commission for use of this band. Any Novice use of the band would necessarily be on an interim basis. "We will not finalize the matter of permitting Novice amateurs in the 220-225 MHz band until these petitions are resolved." The outstanding petitions ask for 220 MHz allocations for ACSB (narrow-band) Land Mobile use and reading for the blind services.

The FCC said that they considered including Novices in the new Volunteer Examiner System but were "reluctant to disturb the present procedure under which aspirants to amateur radio receive licenses quickly and

free of charge." The Commission also questioned the capacity of its new VE/VEC system to handle a large volume of Novice applicants.

## SEPARATE TECHNICIAN & GENERAL TESTS

The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking also contained a small surprise footnote! In the fine print, the FCC noted that it would be a simple task to split the present Technician class examination into two sections - separating the medium and high frequency from the VHF/UHF questions. Element 3(A) VHF and UHF questions could be the requirement for the Technician Class with Element 3(B) ...MF/HF topics, a prerequisite for the General Class.

Up until that point we had never given any thought to comparing Novice Enhancement with the Incentive Licensing proceeding of some twenty years earlier. The test Element 3(A) and 3(B) separation suggestion made us remember how the Element 4(A) Advanced and 4(B) Extra Class written examination elements came about.

It was then that we realized that Novice Enhancement was beginning to look like an extension of 1967's Incentive Licensing action. We also remembered the flak that the ARRL and the FCC took when amateurs lost privileges because of it. We were careful to suggest in our comments to the FCC that all amateurs be allowed full amateur power when operating on the Novice bands so that the General class and higher would not lose any privileges.

The League had a different view of the power level matter. They proposed that only operators previously authorized higher power be allowed to continue to operate at these higher levels. That would grant the unprecedented potential for amateurs in the same license class to operate with different transmitter output power levels!

## COMMENTS CLOSE ON JULY 16TH

A three month public comment deadline was set by the FCC and hundreds of viewpoints poured into the Commission. Surprisingly, many weren't in favor of improving operating privileges for amateur radio beginners at all.



Many 220 MHz repeater users didn't approve of being joined by Novice operators. Some said giving Novices phone privileges would discourage upgrading. "It will be CB all over again!" Many were very annoyed at the League's support of what they thought to be a new ARRL policy. Most comments did agree with Novice Enhancement, however.

The League commented primarily in three areas. The ARRL wanted the 220-225 MHz band to be made available to Novices immediately rather than wait until the unresolved petitions were ruled on. They strongly re-emphasized their position that two rather than one volunteer examiner should be required. The League was also concerned that Novices might cause interference to the existing worldwide network of beacon stations operating in the 28.2 to 28.3 MHz band.

Since the comment date closed on July 16th, the League's comments were necessarily submitted before the ARRL Board of Directors had a chance to meet a week later. At that meeting the Directors voted to change the 1246-1260 MHz Novice voice allocation they previously petitioned for to 1270-1295 MHz to conform with the existing ARRL 1240-1300 MHz (23 cm.) bandplan. That bandplan provides for 239 FM repeater channels (1270-1276 MHz/inputs paired with 1282-1288 MHz/outputs) and 39 FM simplex channels between 1294 and 1295 MHz.

At that meeting, many of the League's directors wanted Novice examinations administered exclusively within the VE/VEC program and a non-renewable Novice term of three years. Both suggestions were turned down by the majority. The League asked for the frequency change in the 1240-1300 MHz band Novice allocation in their Reply Comments. (Replies closed last August 20th).

Strangely the League never addressed the issue of dividing the Element 3 examination into separate Technician 3(A) and General 3(B) tests. One very prominent amateur did, however.

Probably the nation's most proficient and prolific amateur radio educator is Gordon West, WB6NOA, of Costa Mesa, California. Publicly recognized by the ARRL as the nation's leading ham radio instructor, Gordo has taught amateur radio classes to literally

thousands of new applicants. His excellent amateur radio training materials are widely marketed and used throughout the U.S. He told the Commission that the 574 Technician-General question pool was simply too long and covered too much material to teach effectively at one time.

He said that he would be able to specifically train those students that wish only to obtain the Technician class license more thoroughly if Element 3 were split into two sections. His comments carried a lot of weight with the Commission. Another interesting comment from West noted that "...less than 2% of our Novice class students ever actually get on the air using CW."

### THE ENVELOPE PLEASE....

The amateur community had thought that final action would be taken by the FCC before the end of the 1986 calendar year. One report had it that amateurs would be "getting a Christmas present". Although the FCC's Private Radio Bureau staff completed their analysis of the comments and recommendations before year-end, the Commissioners didn't get to it until January.

The Novice Enhancement issue was initially scheduled for an Open Commissioners Meeting on February 12th, but more pressing Commission matters required that it be handled in a different manner. The Report & Order document was circulated to each Commissioner's office for their individual approval and signature rather than being addressed collectively at an Open meeting.

The final signature came on Wednesday, January 28th, when Commissioner Dennis R. Patrick approved Novice Enhancement, PR Docket 86-161. It was unanimous. Every Commissioner agreed to it. The FCC's Private Radio Bureau issued a press release on Friday, January 30, 1987, notifying the public of their action.

The release was very short - and raised many questions. While the 10, 1.25 and 0.23 meter bands were authorized, no specifics were given. The next two pages will be written on February 10th (and hopefully) will include these specifics. We understand that some proposals in the NPRM were changed and the potential exists for some "surprises!"



[The Report and Order was released on the morning of February 10, 1987. Following is a summary of its contents. The effective date of Novice Enhancement is March 21, 1987, at 0001 UTC]

## WHAT THE COMMENTS SAID

More than 350 public comments were filed. Over 80% of the commenters supported the proposal to create a greater desire in new entrants into amateur radio to stay with the hobby and advance through its five tier licensing structure.

Several manufacturers and distributors of amateur radio equipment said they hoped it would curb the loss of operators and consequent declining sales of equipment.

Major concerns in the comments were that: excessive privileges could diminish the incentive for Novices to upgrade to a higher operator license and objections to authorizing present Novice and Technician licensees additional privileges ("grandfathering") without requiring them to qualify by further examination.

ARRL commented that there was no relationship between this proceeding and frequency allocation matters and that the 220-MHz band should be approved at once rather than waiting until the outstanding petitions are ruled on.

Other comments discussed potential biological hazards of the 1240-1300 MHz band and the possibility of attracting unlawful operators from the nearby 11-meter band.

Although Novice operators commented that lower power stations would be at a distinct disadvantage, the FCC noted that higher class operators would lose existing privileges if required to operate at these same levels.

There was agreement that any new written Novice examination should correspond to the privileges authorized. Many commenters discussed ARRL's request for two administering volunteer examiners although some said the one-VE requirement would be more convenient and less stressful for beginners. Some thought the new Novice examinations should fall under the VEC system. (ARRL opposed this approach.)

## ACTION BY THE FCC ON THE COMMENTS

The FCC said that the prospect of enhanced privileges has already stimulated growth in the amateur service. In FY-1986, nearly 21,000 new persons entered ham radio - 19,000 at the Novice level. Furthermore, the number of licensees dropping out decreased by 15.13% - a "clear indicator that changes in the entry level license are appropriate."

**1.25 meter (220-225 MHz) Band:** ARRL asked that Novices be permitted use of the entire band with a 25 watt power output, but not establish or be a control operator of a repeater station. To protect weak signal, moonbounce and propagation beacons below 222-MHz, the FCC authorized frequencies 222.10-223.91 MHz. This will allow operation on repeater and simplex channels.

**23 cm. (1240-1300-MHz) Band:** The FCC said, "We agree with the commenters that the UHF 0.23 meter subband should be at 1270-1295 MHz to allow Novice operators to gain experience with repeater operation. Low transmitter power and incorporation of suitable safety precaution information in the amateur radio practices examination topics should assure that Novice operators will not endanger themselves."

**10 meter (28.0-29.7 MHz) Band:** The FCC felt that the prospect of interference to the 10-meter beacon system was speculative. "Moreover, the low power limit proposed for stations with Novice control operators should satisfy this concern." The Commission agreed that digital and limited voice privileges "should provide the proper degree of enhancement so that Novice operators would still have an incentive to upgrade to higher operator classes."

The FCC said they still believed in lower power restrictions for the Novice sections in the new bands. "The restrictions will add a further incentive to upgrade the class of license." The FCC also thought that due to a lesser experience level, "Novice operators are more likely unintentionally to cause interference."

The Commission increased the Element 2 (Novice written) examination from 20 to 30 questions "to make the scope of Element 2 appropriate to the new privileges. Adopted



also were rules providing for two VE's to prepare and administer Novice operator examinations.

The FCC also said that Novice operators may not be upgrading to Technician operator because the content of Element 3 requires them to also be knowledgeable about General Class operator privileges. "This is the only instance in the operator license progression where the applicant must not only know the material for the operator privileges that will be authorized at the next step (Technician) but also must know the material for the next higher step (General).

To resolve a burden upon applicants, VE's and instructors, "...we will separate Element 3 into two parts, Technician questions will be placed into an Element 3(A) VEC question pool and General class questions will be placed into an Element 3(B) VEC question pool."

The FCC said it would be timely to make this change now since VEC's will have to revise Element 3 as a result of this action in order to move certain of its questions to (the Novice) Element 2 and the FCC Form 610 (application form) is being revised in order to incorporate provisions for Novice operator examination certification by two administering VE's."

### THE NEW §PART 97 RULES

#### §Section 97.7 (a) Novice Class

Band	Frequency	Emissions
10	28100-28300	kHz A1A (CW) F1B (digital)
	28300-28500	kHz A1A (CW) J3E (sideband telephony)
1.25	222.1-223.91	MHz All amateur modes and emissions.
0.23	1270-1295	MHz All amateur modes and emissions.

#### §Section 97.67 Maximum Transmitting Power

Band	License Class:	Transmitter Power
10	Novice	200 watts P.E.P.
	Technician	200 watts P.E.P.
	General & Up	1500 watts P.E.P.
1.25	Novice	25 watts P.E.P.

Band	License Class:	Transmitter Power
1.25	Technician & Up	1500 watts P.E.P.
0.23	Novice	5 watts P.E.P.
	Technician & Up	1500 watts P.E.P.

#### §Section 97.85, 97.86, 97.87

No amateur station at which the control operator or station licensee holds a Novice class operator license shall be in repeater, auxiliary or beacon operation.

#### §Section 97.21 Examination elements and standards

Element 2: At least 30 questions concerning the privileges of Novice class licensees.

Element 3(A) At least 25 questions concerning the additional privileges of Technician class licensees;

Element 3(B) At least 25 questions concerning the additional privileges of General class licensees

Syllabus Topic:	Exam. Elements:		
	2	3(A)	3(B)
FCC Rules & Regulations	35%	20%	16%
Operating Procedures	5%	12%	12%
Radio Wave Propagation	5%	12%	12%
Amateur Radio Practices	15%	16%	20%
Electrical Principles	15%	8%	8%
Amateur Station Equip.	5%	8%	4%
Practical Circuits	5%	4%	4%
Signals & Emissions	5%	8%	8%
Antennas & Feedlines	10%	12%	16%

Technician class amateurs that have passed Element 3 prior to March 21, 1987, will only have to pass Element 1B (13 wpm Morse code) to upgrade to General Class.

There you have it! The complete story of Novice Enhancement! A lot must be done between now and its March 21st effective date. VEC's must agree on the 100 additional questions for the Element 2 (Novice) pool - and Element 3 (which now contains 574 Tech-General questions) must be split into two 287 Element 3(A) Technician and 3(B) General class question pools.

In our next issue we will cover what is involved and the VEC progress towards a common question pool which all VEC's are committed to.



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## SHORTWAVE THREAT TO HF HAM RADIO

We commented in our January 15th issue that amateur spectrum was vulnerable to future attack by shortwave broadcasters - something that the ARRL and IARU seems oblivious to. An article in last week's "Broadcasting" magazine seems to bear out that the threat is indeed there!

Representatives of some 120 countries assembled in Geneva on February 2nd for a five week (second session) World Administrative Radio Conference to develop a plan for HF (3 to 30 MHz) international broadcasting.

The State Department views the problem confronting the conference as how "to fit a size 11 foot into a size 7 shoe." Presently allocated HF broadcasting spectrum can handle a capacity of 18,000 frequency hours daily - while the actual use is up to 23,000 hours - a 25% overload.

The first WARC session held three years ago agreed on an equal access plan where computers would be used to sort out and assign frequencies based on requirements submitted by member countries. The IFRB (the International Telecommunication Union's International Frequency Registration Board) developed four frequency plans - one for each season - to accomodate differing propagation conditions.

IFRB tests were conducted and the system is now being termed "unworkable" by our delegation and other large HF broadcast spectrum users including the Soviet Union, China and the United Kingdom. Nations that submitted requirements apparently never put their shortwave broadcasts on the air since IFRB tests showed allocated usage of up to 40,000 frequency hours daily against the 18,000 hour spectrum capacity.

The computer assisted HF frequency assigning system also does not take "jamming" into consideration. Monitoring campaigns conducted by the IFRB detected more than 1,300 jamming locations since the first WARC HF session in 1984.

The U.S. is making it clear that it will not accept any plan that could wipe out the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Liberty where billions have been authorized by

Congress. The United States is supporting a resolution to be introduced by another nation that will call for a 1989 international meeting to schedule a "Relocation Conference" to be held in the early 1990's to reallocate spectrum for shortwave broadcasting.

Some countries are calling for a spectrum efficient conversion from double to single sideband broadcasts. It could increase spectrum by as much as 30%. The problem here is a lack of appropriate receivers in the hands of the public.

Eventual broadcast expansion into the ham bands - or even an Amateur Service spectrum reduction to accomodate shortwave broadcasting - is termed a "distinct possibility" since HF amateur and shortwave frequencies are adjacent and many of the underdeveloped nations (such as Algeria and those of Asia, the Middle East and Africa) place little (or no) importance in having their (amateur) population communicate with outsiders.

There is no ARRL or IARU (International Amateur Radio Union) representation on the U.S. delegation although there is at least one amateur representing the Voice of America. He is Dexter Anderson, W4KM, of Washington, D.C. who as an expert in Russian, also translates the USSR's ham magazine, "Radio" for us.

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## AMATEURS TO TALK IN STEREO?

The Commission has authorized emission F8E for amateur stations transmitting on amateur service frequencies 1240 MHz and above. F8E emission allows stations to transmit with two or more channels of analog voice information on a single frequency.

Authorization of emission F8E will enable amateurs to experiment with an additional transmission mode and, thus, further advance amateur radio technology. Moreover, it appears that no adverse effect upon existing amateur communications would occur by permitting amateur stations to transmit the additional emission, the FCC said.

In order to preclude interference, the Commission encourages all amateur stations transmitting this additional emission to follow voluntary band plans.

[Report & Order, FCC 87-34, Jan. 28, 1987]



- Regency Electronics, Inc. (Indianapolis) has introduced a controversial new public information radio. The mobile receiver which looks similar to a radar detector plugs into a cigarette lighter and is preprogrammed with all state and local VHF/UHF police enforcement frequencies by state. Unlike scanners, the "Informant" eliminates the hassle of having to look up frequencies and program them into a scanner. With a single touch to access the 2-letter state code, the receiver will scan only that state's police frequencies at the unbelievable rate of 50 channels per second using new "TurboScan" technology! A digital display indicates the state being monitored and the type of transmission ("state police", "county police", "local police", etc.) An instant weather feature also searches for the closest active bulletin frequency of the National Weather Service. (\$369.95 list.)

- We understand that the White House has picked Commissioner Dennis Patrick, 35, to be the new FCC Chairman. A rumor is also circulating that disappointed Commissioner Mimi Dawson will leave the FCC and will be elevated to a Under Secretary cabinet position.

- Carnival Cruise Lines (out of Miami) has been socked with a \$5,000 FCC fine for violating international telecommunications law. They were found guilty of transmitting two-way data communications between the U.S. and the Bahamas. Western Union also got tabbed for the unusual amount of \$9,999.99 for the same thing.

- At least one Personal Radio Service will have to pay the newly re-implemented FCC licensing fees. The General Mobile Radio Service license fee will be \$30 after April 1st. GMRS is the 8-pair (old Class "A" CB) UHF service. Ham radio is exempt from fees.

- Tandy/Radio Shack is converting 90 of its Business Products Division Computer Centers to Retail Division operated Plus Computer Centers. The "Plus Centers" will carry all computer products but will not offer on-site training, repair or outside sales capability. Tandy reported a 19% second quarter income climb which was linked to increasing its outside computer sales force to 1500.

- IBM's 8086-based \$1,200 CC (for "Clone Crusher" instead of PC) is reportedly having severe production problems and will not be

introduced until at least April. IBM closed out 1986 with a 27% decline in earnings - one of its poorest performances ever! AT&T is also hurting! They have reduced their PC's by as much as 32% "due to a changing market." IBM has chopped 12,000 people, AT&T about 30,000, to compete with "leaner" companies.

- The CARF (Canadian Amateur Radio Federation) News Service says that the DOC (Department of Communications) is making a concerted effort to make 18 and 24 MHz available to Canadian hams by April 1st.

- ABC has filed a copyright infringement suit against Satellite Broadcast Networks, Inc. SBN picks up free broadcast TV programming off of the air and after uplinking and scrambling, sells it as "wireless cable" to backyard satellite dish owners! SBN says that the Copyright Act of 1976 left the issue unresolved.

- Jim Grubbs, K9EI, will introduce his new book, "The Digital Novice" at the 1987 Dayton HamVention. Book covers everything from Morse to Packet...and what the digital ham future holds! [\$9.95 + \$2.50 postage to: P.O. Box #3042, Springfield, IL 62708.]

- According to the "Times of India" (New Delhi) Prime Minister (and amateur VU2RG) Rajiv Gandhi has been clearing the way for businesses in India to use computers since his rise to power two years ago! The airlines, railroads and more recently, banking has been computerized. Last September, Hindustan Computers, Ltd., set off a price war when they became the first home owned PC maker. Indian "electronification measures" are widely opposed by powerful unions. Electronics grew 40% in India in 1985-6. (Wonder if the fact that his mother was Prime Minister before him had anything to do with his being able to get his initials for a ham call sign?)

- Using 14.275 MHz, the IARN, International Amateur Radio Network, assisted in making complicated arrangements for a sick San Salvadoran baby in need of open heart surgery to be flown to the U.S. Over 600 pints of blood was rounded up across the nation on amateur frequencies: 14.275, 14.313 and 14.332 MHz. The baby is now recovering. Donations of about \$3,000 have been received toward the \$7,000 hospital bill which was guaranteed by the IARN. (Donations should go to: Glenn Baxter/K1MAN - IARN; Long Point Lodge; Belgrade Lakes, Maine 04918)



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## K.C. REPEATER CONTROVERSY CONTINUES

The FCC's Ray Kowalski, Chief of the (Washington, D.C.) Special Services Division has sent a letter to Neil Clendenin, WD0GXL, Secretary of the MO-KAN Council of Amateur Radio Clubs concerning repeater coordination. Both MO-KAN and MACC (Mid-America Coordination Council) claim to be the proper coordinating body in the Kansas City area.

Kowalski said that the FCC is in no position to determine who the proper coordinator is and would rely upon state and regional councils to recognize legitimate local coordinators. "...a regional or state council's refusal to recognize a local coordinator is prima facie evidence that that coordinator does not have the support of those eligible to establish repeaters in the area it claims to coordinate," he wrote.

Kowalski added that other evidence may be just as pertinent. "The development of such evidence may be especially appropriate where the local coordinator believes that the regional or state council has acted on inaccurate or biased information. Whatever the process, it is the amateurs themselves who must pick their coordinator."

"The FCC's rules do not provide for FCC determination of the legitimacy of each amateur frequency coordinator. We expect the parties to such disputes to behave honorably, taking account of the tradition of the Amateur service and the potential exposure of uninvolved repeater owners and users to rule violations. An unseemly dispute between coordinators is not only counterproductive but invites unscrupulous opportunists to take advantage of the situation." Kowalski also sent a copy of his letter to the MACC.

MO-KAN still feels that they have the majority of the support in the area. Supposedly, Paul Grauer, W0FIR, the ARRL Midwest Director, tried last year to get the MACC to agree to a vote on who the proper coordinator was, but this was turned down.

Barry Roseman, WA0LHK, says that MACC refuses to tell MO-KAN those repeaters that they have coordinated in Kansas City. To add more controversy to the situation, MACC has replaced the previous Kansas state coordinator, Dan Cropp, WD0BRZ, who reportedly refuses to turn over his data base.

## FCC SEEKS SPECIAL CALL SIGN SYSTEM

On February 3, 1987, the FCC released PRB-3 (for third Private Radio Bureau inquiry) which looks into developing a system that would allow amateur radio operators to receive a station call sign of their choice. While the document was anticipated (See W5YI Report, November 15, 1986, Page 5) there were some features that definitely were not!

The Commission acknowledged a letter dated June 17, 1986, from the ARRL expressing an interest in finding a way by which requests for specific call signs for amateur stations can be honored through a system administered in the private sector.

The FCC said that Callbook Magazine, Gordon Girton, W6NLG, (Sunnyvale VEC) and the Central Alabama VEC have also expressed an interest in such a program. The Commission went on record as favoring such a system "if it can be accomplished with no additional cost or workload to the FCC."

The purpose of PRB-3 is to solicit comments and proposals on this matter from interested persons so that a determination can be made as to whether to proceed with its implementation.

"There is a large demand in the Amateur service," the FCC said, "for call signs of choice. Because of limited resources, the FCC cannot honor requests for specific call signs." The present FCC amateur call sign assignment system is totally automated: call signs are assigned on the station license from alphabetical lists of specific call sign blocks arranged according to mailing address and operator license class.

The FCC feels that a practical approach would be for the actual station licensing function (including the assignment of a call sign) to be performed by the FCC before the private sector becomes involved. Then, upon the licensee's request, a Special Call Sign Coordinator (SCSC) in the private sector would assign one or more supplemental special call signs. "The selection system for determining which licensees would be eligible

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for which call signs would be the prerogative of the SCSC.

A special call sign could be used in lieu of the FCC-assigned call sign during the station identification procedure required by §Part 97.84. The assignment of a special call sign would be a service for the licensee, not a condition of FCC licensing nor a service replacing the FCC.

The SCSC would maintain a data base of assigned special call signs for use in monitoring and compliance work. Special call sign assignments would not be incorporated into the FCC's license data base.

The big surprise of PRB-3 is that the FCC is proposing to completely scrap its call sign assignment system whereby amateurs qualify for shorter call sign formats by upgrading or a different call sign (in the same format) when an amateur changes mailing address to a different region. The FCC would discontinue processing requests for all call sign changes and all call signs currently assigned to amateur stations would be frozen.

All new call signs, regardless of the licensee's operator class, would be systematically assigned a 2 X 3 (2 prefix letters, followed by the present numerical radio district and 3 suffix letters) from the prefix block: NA-NZ. This block will provide over 4.5 million call signs.

All other call signs would be made available to the SCSC for assignment as special call signs. Furthermore, as call signs which are currently in use are dropped from the FCC data base due to failure to renew the license, they would be available to the SCSC for assignment as special call signs.

The FCC is leaning towards selecting a single organization to serve as SCSC since it would be more manageable ... "However, we invite comments with respect to whether there should be only one or multiple SCSC's. Our preliminary view is that having one SCSC would promote a more efficient system by substantially simplifying the special call sign assignment process. If multiple SCSC's assigned special call signs, each would have to be aware of the others' assignments in progress at all times. Otherwise the same special call sign could be assigned to different

stations. The logistics of handling this situation appear to be difficult."

"A single SCSC would minimize the number of points of contact between the SCSC and the FCC. As the number of SCSC's increased so would the administrative burden on the FCC. This benefit is especially important considering the likelihood of limited agency resources in coming years."

"Moreover, if there were multiple SCSC's it would be likely that each would use a different selection system unless performance standards were established. There could be considerable inconsistency in the assignments. For instance, a call sign available only to an Amateur Extra operator under one SCSC's system might be available to a lower class operator under another SCSC's selection system."

"The special call sign assignment system that we envision would be operated on a not-for-profit basis but the SCSC could recover reasonable out-of-pocket administrative costs."

The FCC published the following...

## SCSC Selection Criteria:

1. ability to assign call signs to amateur stations in an efficient and objective manner;
2. ability to provide an accurate on-line access data base of assigned special call signs for monitoring and compliance work;
3. ability to minimize the FCC resources required in the establishment of the special call sign system; and
4. ability to minimize the cost to the licensee for administering the system.

Parties wishing to file formal comments on these issues, or to raise additional or conflicting issues or to submit a proposal to be an SCSC should do so by filing an original and four copies with the: **Secretary, FCC, 1919 M Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20554** on or before April 23, 1987.

Proposals must respond to the above selection criteria and "must state the estimated annual burden of administering the system and maintaining the data base." All filings should refer to PRB-3.

FCC 87-35, February 3, 1987